Long Island Botanical Society

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In Memoriam: Orland J. "Skip" Blanchard (1944-2024)

Skip was a central figure in the early years of LIBS. He was a founding member and served as President (1988-1989), Vice-President, and Chair of the Local Flora, Field Trips, and Program Committees. After retiring to Florida in 2006, Skip and his wife Jane continued serving LIBS as copy editors for the Newsletter. His breadth of interest included all aspects of natural history and will always be remembered by his quick wit and blue shirts with red suspenders.

Eric Lamont

Skip showing a northern barrens tiger beetle at Sams Point Preserve in July 2006. Photo by Jesse Jaycox.

For as far back as I can remember, Skip was always a flagbearer of the Long Island Botanical Society, both in the meeting room and out in the field. His attendance in meetings was beheld by his encyclopedic comments of botany and shouted quips at every opportunity. And on field hikes, following him was a sure way to increase one's knowledge of the flora surrounding him. My memories of the Long Island Botanical Society will always remind me of the burly figure with suspenders on his trousers and a dainty hand lens in his fingers.

John Potente

I have so many memories of him - he was larger than life.

Carol Johnston

I can't imagine a world without that blue-shirted, red-suspendered guy. He would keep me in stitches with his jokes & bad puns. He was patient and helpful in dispensing his vast knowledge. He remarked once how companionable LIBS members were. There was no better example of this than Skip himself.

Donald House

We have many good memories of meetings and field trips, both botanical and butterfly surveys. And oh, all those bad puns!

Lois & Al Lindberg

Skip was the first person that showed me how to turn binoculars upside down to magnify plants. He then went to Gainesville where I had lived in grad school.

Steve Young

Skip was always the guy with the short quip to make us all laugh—Jane was the silent partner til she talked about Fern reproduction!!! Skip was also quick to share his knowledge to a novice like me—always the teacher. What an honor to have known him!!!

Kathy Gaffney

(tributes continued on page 18)

Long Island Botanical Society

Founded: 1986 • Incorporated: 1989

The Long Island Botanical Society is dedicated to the promotion of field botany and a greater understanding of the plants that grow wild on Long Island, New York.

Visit the Society's Web site
www.libotanical.org

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Society News

Skip Blanchard: a personal reminiscence

Orland J. Blanchard, who always went by the name Skip, will be remembered as a leading figure in regional natural history, primarily of Long Island but extending to other parts of New York. His contributions on both flora and fauna were myriad though they often ended up in the grey literature. More or less contemporaneously, he was also an academic and accomplished systematist, specializing in tropical Malvaceae (others will be better able to speak to his taxonomic work). Most readers of this newsletter will recall that he served ably as president of LIBS during its early period.

From a closer perspective, I would add that Skip was an uncommonly multifaceted person: influential teacher, skilled guitarist, scuba enthusiast, traveler, and singularly versatile naturalist, just to name a few aspects. His breadth of interests, knowledge and connections, combined with a zest for exploration and mastery of humor in all forms, made him an unparalleled field companion. His unassuming persona belied a quick, sardonic wit and astuteness in all sorts of affairs. Occasionally this seemed to catch people off guard, yet those who knew him never expected less, and were rarely disappointed. A typical conversation with Skip would shift off and back on topic while a stream of witticisms flowed. This made for many animated and still memorable meetings and field outings.

Our meeting dates back to 1986 at some function in Cold Spring Harbor. That it was a less than standout moment speaks to not only Skip's laidback manner but also the contrasts in ages and backgrounds: he a tenured professor and recent arrival, I a green student and home-grown. Despite this, we clicked and began working together not long afterwards. Notable collaborations included floristic surveys of the Jamaica Bay area (1988) and parts of the Stony Brook University campus (1990). We, along with a host of other botanists, also spent countless hours on the Long Island Flora Atlas effort, through many rounds of meetings and collecting trips. While in retrospect it is unfortunate that none of these works saw publication, at the time either concerns about data sensitivity took precedence or publishing just was not a driving factor.

After our respective departures from Long Island in the mid-1990's, Skip and I continued to correspond. Subject matters varied, but beetles were a favorite. Skip had a vast yet well organized collection, formerly housed in his basement, which by his own count numbered 19,000 specimens circa 2013. Still, additions were welcomed. I would periodically send him collections from Connecticut, which though modest in number and of mostly common species (with a few noteworthy taxa sprinkled in) usually received enthusiastic feedback. While the flow of specimens later ceased our exchange continued, albeit with diminishing regularity, until 2023.

Whether consciously on his part or not—I would guess a mix—Skip played a key role in my development as a field botanist and writer. While critical at times, he was never dismissive or overbearing. For this gentle, osmotic sort of early mentoring he earned my eternal gratitude. As I reflect now on our friendship, perhaps the best words I can offer are that he was as loyal an associate and as steady a man as I have ever had the good fortune to know.

Chris Mangels

(tributes, continued from cover)

I must admit I was shocked when I read Eric's email of Skip's passing. Immediately memories of going out in the field with him and Jane came rushing back to me. Perhaps the most memorable of these was our rediscovery of Autumn Coralroot (*Corallorhiza odontorhiza*) in Hubbard County Park on November 4th, 2000. I was teaching a course on Long Island Natural History to twenty or, so science teachers and we were covering various Pine Barrens wetlands on this particular day. Our morning was spent in the bog surrounding Owl Pond, located about 1.3 miles west of where we would come to find a sizable population of Coralroots growing alongside the gravel road leading into Hubbard County Park.

Skip at Marshlands Conservancy on June 29, 2002. Photo by Donald House.

Earlier that morning my teachers and I found a fruiting coralroot on the trail leading down to Owl Pond. I made a mental note of the location and had intended to return later after the class ended to look for more. You can imagine my surprise when we ran into Skip and Jane coming back from their search to redocument a population of Seabeach Knotweed (*Polygonum glaucum*) for the Natural Heritage Program. Skip was excited to see me because on their way to look for the Knotweed they had discovered numerous Coralroots which they had determined to be Autumn Coralroots, along the gravel road leading into the park. A quick survey made by the three of us yielded what we estimated there to be 200⁺ plants growing on both sides of the roadway. We later learned that the count was over 400 plants as counts made by Eric Lamont, Barbara Conolly and Betty Lotowycz would yield. This discovery was by far my most memorable time in the field with Skip. I will miss dearly….

Robert McGrath

[Editor's note: in his final email to me on February 25, 2024 Skip submitted the following note for the LIBS Newsletter]

Reflections on orchids in Mud Creek Swamp

Skip Blanchard

Taylor Sturm's rediscovery of the lesser purple fringed orchid *Platanthera psycodes* on Long Island (LIBS Newsletter, 2023, vol. 33) has prompted me to reflect on my own orchid experience. My focus here is on a Finger Lakes site called Mud Creek Swamp – a demonstrably orchid-rich area (Wiegand and Eames 1925). The swamp was originally brought to my attention by Prof. William J. Dress of Cornell's L.H. Bailey Hortorium. Dress had wondered about the possibility of succession there and urged me to visit. At that time (1969—54 years ago!) I found and photo-documented the following orchid species:

- *Cypripedium parviflorum* var. *parviflorum*, southern small yellow lady's slipper
- *Cypripedium parviflorum* var. *pubescens*, large yellow lady's slipper
- *Cypripedium reginae*, showy lady's slipper
- *Platanthera dilatata* var. *dilatata*, bog candle
- *Platanthera grandiflora*, large purple fringed orchid
- *Malaxis monophyllos* var. *brachypoda*, North American white adder's mouth

Of these orchids I found that *Platanthera grandiflora* was a new species for the site.

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Noteworthy plants reported from the North Fork of Long Island, NY

Eric E. Lamont
President, Long Island Botanical Society

During the last few years my botanical attention has been focused on the North Fork hamlet of Northville, Suffolk County and I have found several noteworthy plants. Of the 12 species reported below, four are native and eight are non-native. Vouchers have been prepared for each species and are currently in my personal herbarium, to be deposited at The New York Botanical Garden herbarium (NY); collection numbers are to be assigned. Nomenclature in this paper follows Werier (2017) and rarity status follows Ring (2023). I thank Bob Gibbons†, Vicki Bustamante, David Werier, and Steve Young for assistance in identifying four of the below species.

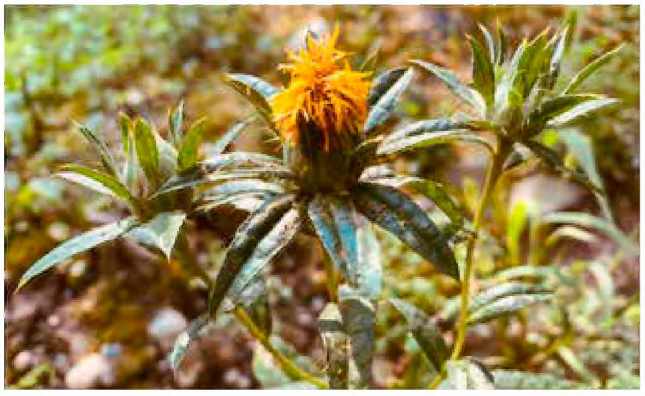

Figure 1. *Carthamus tinctorius*, safflower. Upper inflorescence with thistle-like yellow flowers; Northville, Suffolk Co. Photo by Eric Lamont.

Carthamus tinctorius, safflower (Asteraceae, the Aster Family). Non-native. (Fig. 1).

New record for Long Island. Voucher: Northville, one flowering individual spontaneously growing on a pile of dirt near bird feeders on Sound Shore Road, 19 Jul 2024, *E.E. Lamont s.n.* This collection represents the second record of this species for New York (Werier et al. 2024). In the Northeast it has also been recorded from Barnstable County, Massachusetts (Haines 2011). It is widespread on the west coast of USA where it is cultivated. This thistle-like herb is native to arid regions of Iran and Turkey and is one of the earliest known crop plants, with cultivation dating back to prehistoric times (Keil 2006). Today, it is known only in cultivation and as escapes. Safflower is cultivated as an oil seed, a source of vegetable dye, as birdseed, and as an ornamental.

Cenchrus purpurascens, foxtail fountaingrass or Chinese fountaingrass (Poaceae, the Grass Family). Non-native.

New record for the North Fork. Voucher: Northville, roadside clump of individuals on Sound Shore Road (cultivated individuals nearby), 10 Nov 2023, *E.E. Lamont s.n.* This ornamental grass, native of east Asia, has recently become established along roadsides on the South Fork. In New York, it is only recorded from Long Island and Westchester County (Werier et al. 2024). Weakley et al. (2023) noted, "This species seems to be developing into an invasive species, with increasing reports of its spread into natural areas, as opposed to merely occurring as a waif following cultivation" and Werier (2022) added, "This species is commonly planted and has the potential of becoming problematic in natural areas. It may be more frequent outside of cultivation than currently known."

Chorispora tenella, crossflower (Brassicaceae, the Mustard Family). Non-native. (Fig. 2).

New record for Long Island. Voucher: Northville, one flowering individual spontaneously growing in sandy/gravelly, nutrient poor soil on Sound Shore Road, 9 Jun 2023, *E.E. Lamont s.n.* This collection represents the second record of this species for New York (Werier et al. 2024). It has also been recorded from Massachusetts (Haines 2011) and southeastern Pennsylvania (Rhoads and Block 2007). This Eurasian plant is widely established and weedy in arid

Figure 2a. *Chrisopora tenella*, crossflower; top, flowers; bottom, glandular fruit (silique) and side view of flower. Photos from Plants of the World Online, Kew Royal Botanic Gardens.

Figure 2b. *Chorispora tenella*, crossflower; established in a field in western USA. Photo from Plants of the World Online, Kew Royal Botanic Gardens.

parts of western USA where it spreads prolifically by seed and can become problematic in agricultural areas. The leaves are edible raw.

Cyperus echinatus, globe flat sedge (Cyperaceae, the Sedge Family). Native.

New record for Suffolk County. Voucher: Northville, growing with grasses and herbs at the base of a wooden fence on Sound Shore Road, 10 Nov 2023, *E.E. Lamont s.n.* Listed as rare and endangered (S1) in New York (Ring 2023). Werier (2022) noted, "It appears to do well with at least limited disturbances" and Haines (2011) described the preferred habitat as "open, mesic, often human-disturbed soils."

Eupatorium cannabinum, hemp agrimony (Asteraceae, the Aster Family). Non-native. (Fig. 3).

New record for Suffolk County. Voucher: Northville, escaped from cultivation, 21 Sep 2021, *E.E. Lamont s.n.* In 2018 I introduced several rootstocks of *E. cannabinum* (from mountains in northern Slovakia) into my wildflower garden in Northville. In 2019 and 2020, I was pleased to see stems emerge each spring followed by flowers in August (visited by swarms of insects including species of Lepidoptera, Hymenoptera, Diptera, and others) and copious amounts of seed in autumn. In the summer of 2021, I found one plant of *E. cannabinum* growing in another part of my property, approximately 100 feet from the parent individuals. The plant was somewhat spindly but produced flowers in August and seed in September. I collected a voucher of the above-ground plant (Fig. 3) but did not collect or disturb the underground parts. In 2022, 2023, and 2024 the plant emerged each spring and later produced flowers and seeds. *Eupatorium cannabinum* is native of Europe; in the USA it is recorded from NY, PA, MD, and VA and described as "casually adventive" (Siripun and Schilling 2006) and "perhaps merely a waif" (Weakley et al. 2023).

Figure 3. Voucher of *Eupatorium cannabinum* from Northville, Suffolk Co. Photo by Eric Lamont.

Gamochaeta pensylvanica, Pennsylvania cudweed or Pennsylvania everlasting (Asteraceae, the Aster Family). Non-native.

New record for the North Fork. Voucher: Northville, roadside lawn, Sound Shore Road, 5 Sep 2024, *E.E. Lamont s.n.* *Gamochaeta pensylvanica* is rapidly colonizing Long Island where it is most often encountered in sidewalk medians, lawns, and weedy areas with low vegetation. The species was first collected on Long Island in 1989 by Tom Delendick in Kings and Queens Counties (Atha 2016). In 2009 it was reported from more than 30 localities in Queens County (Lamont and Glenn 2009). It is now known from all four counties. The species is thought to be native to South America, where the genus is most abundant (Nesom 2004). The *pensylvanica* epithet is a misnomer, as the plant is not native to Pennsylvania and only marginally naturalized there.

Leymus arenarius, [synonym: *Elymus arenarius*], European dune grass (Poaceae, the Grass Family). Non-native. (Fig. 4).

New record for Suffolk County. Voucher: Northville Beach, in sand at base of bluff on Long Island Sound, just landward of beach rack line, approx. 1 mile west of Iron Pier, 15 Oct 2022, *E.E. Lamont s.n.* The Northville Beach colony of *L. arenarius* occurs with *Ammophila breviligulata* and other native beach plants in the upper beach at the base of a north-facing bluff (of the Harbor Hill Moraine). The habitat is continually blasted each winter by strong NW winds laden with salt spray blowing across the Sound from Connecticut, 20 miles away. This attractive grass has become a popular ornamental on Long Island and has been planted in mass on highway medians in northern Brookhaven Township, Suffolk County (Fig. 4). It is likely this grass will continue to colonize new sites on Long Island.

(continued on next page)

(Noteworthy Plants, continued from page 21)

Figure 4. *Leymus arenarius*, European dune grass; above. The Northville Beach colony; below, planted in a highway median (Rte. 25a) in northern Brookhaven Township, Suffolk Co. Photos by Eric Lamont.

Paspalum leave, field bead grass (Poaceae, the Grass Family). Native.

Rare plant in New York (state rank: S3, Rare). Voucher: Northville, edge of lawn bordering a shrubland, 2 Sep 2024, *E.E. Lamont s.n.* This native grass first appeared in my back yard lawn about five years ago and has spread to form a colony of about a dozen large clumps. In 2020, Vicki Bustamante also collected this grass in Montauk, Suffolk Co. Werier (2022) noted, "This species is becoming more common in the southeastern region of the state and is likely more common than current records indicate." *Paspalum leave* is near the northern limit of its range on Long Island and its recent spread is another example of a native species with southern affinities extending its range northward, suggesting a potential role of climate change.

Sagina decumbens* subsp. *decumbens, trailing pearlwort (Caryophyllaceae, the Pink Family). Native.

Rare plant in New York (state rank: S1, Endangered). Voucher: Northville, Iron Pier, in parking lot cracks, 7 May 2024, *E.E. Lamont s.n.* In early May 2024 I first encountered this delicate wildflower growing in the cracks of a brick sidewalk in Mattituck, Suffolk Co. (more than a dozen individuals). I keyed the plant to *S. decumbens* subsp. *decumbens* but knew that couldn't be correct because of its extreme rarity in New York. I then found a second population growing in parking lot cracks at Iron Pier, Northville and this collection also keyed to *S. decumbens* subsp. *decumbens*. I sent a collection to David Werier who confirmed it as *S. decumbens* subsp. *decumbens*, adding: "I have been finding *Sagina decumbens* elsewhere in SE New York recently and think it has become a common member of our flora. The one site I collected it on Long Island is at Calvert Vaux Park in Kings Co." (David Werier, personal communication). Trailing pearlwort is at the northeastern limit of its range on Long Island and southern New England and its recent spread on the island is another example of a native species with southern affinities extending its range northward, suggesting a potential role of climate change.

Solanum rostratum, buffalo bur (Solanaceae, The Potato or Nightshade Family). Non-native. (Fig. 5)

New record for Riverhead Township, second collection from the North Fork. Voucher: Northville, in a disturbed clearing off Sound Shore Road, 26 Aug 2023, *E.E. Lamont s.n.* In 2023, I found (and collected) one flowering individual spontaneously growing in a disturbed clearing off Sound Shore Road and in 2024 a second flowering individual was located in sandy/gravelly, nutrient poor soil not far from the first. Roy Latham last collected buffalo bur on the North Fork

Figure 5. *Solanum rostratum*, Buffalo bur. Left, flowers; right, fruit. Photos from Go Botany: Native Plant Trust.

77 years ago (voucher: Mattituck, 17 Aug 1946, *Latham 25630*, NYS). The species is rare in Suffolk County, not recently recorded in Nassau County, and extant in Kings and Queens Counties. Buffalo bur is native to the High Plains east of the Rocky Mountains from North Dakota to Mexico. It is named for its prickly fruits that were commonly entangled in the fur of American bison (*Bison bison*). Before the introduction of the potato (*Solanum tuberosum*) to North America, buffalo bur was the original host plant of the destructive Colorado potato beetle.

***Trifolium incarnatum*,** crimson clover, scarlet clover (Fabaceae, the Pea or Bean Family). Non-native. (Fig. 6).

Figure 6. *Trifolium incarnatum*, crimson clover. Photo from Go Botany: Native Plant Trust.

Second collection from Long Island in more than 100 years, new record for Riverhead Township. Voucher: Northville, field on west side of Northville Turnpike just south of Sound Avenue, 9 May 2023, *E.E. Lamont s.n.* This beautiful clover was collected seven times on Long Island in the late 1890s and early 1900s, but subsequently (before this report) was collected only once in the last 110 years (voucher: Suffolk Co., Hauppauge, 17 May 1976, *C.J. Johnston 294*, OBPF). Crimson clover is native to Europe and widely introduced as a forage and cover crop. It has escaped and become naturalized in much of North America. It is a striking species and easy to identify, with its deep red, conic to cylindric inflorescence.

***Tripsacum dactyloides* var. *dactyloides*,** eastern gamma grass, (Poaceae, the Grass Family). Native.

Rare plant in New York (state rank: S2, Threatened). Voucher: Northville, edge of trail, North Fork Preserve, 14 Jul 2024, *R. Stalter & E.E. Lamont s.n.* Eastern gamma grass is considered native in southeastern New York and non-native elsewhere in the state where it is becoming more commonly cultivated for wildlife and as part of "native" plantings (Werier 2022). The property comprising North Fork Preserve (aka North Fork County Park) was managed as a hunting preserve from the 1980s to 2011 and several species of native grasses were planted to attract wildlife, including *Andropogon gerardi* (big bluestem), *Panicum virgatum* (switch grass), and *Sorghastrum nutans* (Indian grass). I had never seen eastern gamma grass at North Fork Preserve until 2024 when Richard Stalter showed me a patch growing among the aforementioned grasses. It is unknown whether this occurrence is natural or introduced. Eastern gamma grass is at the northeastern limit of its range on Long Island and southern New England and was collected five times on the North Fork from 1909 to 1956 (New York State Museum cards).

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2025 Field Trips

Three field trips have thus far been scheduled for 2025 and are joint trips with the North Shore Land Alliance. Register early as these field trips fill up quickly.

April 12, 2025 (Saturday) 11am
Manetto Hills Park, Plainview, Nassau Co.
Trip Leader: Dave Taft
Joint trip with the North Shore Land Alliance

At this time of year, we will be on the lookout for several emerging unusual plant species in the vicinity of this delightful woodland trail tucked between the Northern State Parkway and the LIE. Please register online with the North Shore Land Alliance (northshorelandalliance.org).

May 17, 2025
(Saturday) 10am
Coffin Woods,
Locust Valley, Nassau Co.
Trip Leaders:
Al and Lois Lindberg
Joint trip with the
North Shore Land Alliance

Veteran Long Island naturalists Al and Lois will guide us through this North Shore Wildlife Sanctuary property in the season of spring ephemeral wildflowers, when we expect the preserve's stunning red Trillium flowers will make an appearance. Please register online with the North Shore Land Alliance (northshorelandalliance.org).

Sunday, December 7, 2025 (Sunday) 11am
Hither Hills State Park, Montauk, Suffolk Co.
Trip Leader: Vicki Bustamante
Joint trip with the North Shore Land Alliance

Vicki will lead participants through an enchanted maritime forest, with its twisted oaks and crooked pitch pine trees, in the Walking Dunes. Please register online with the North Shore Land Alliance (northshorelandalliance.org).